Phone: 8457

"Haslemere"
F.16, Palace Road,
Bangalore . S.India.
10th March, 1952.

My dear Mr. Krishna Rao,

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank you very much indeed, for the magnificent performance, and for the endless trouble you have taken to provide this excellent show. Mr. and Mrs. Menhuin and party have appreciated it no end, and all the guests at the recital have enjoyed it beyond words.

Once again I would like to thank you sincerely for your great effort.

With kindest regards,

Yours very sincerely,

Sd. MRS.R.C.HEATH.

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DECCAN HERALD : SUNDAY, APRIL 20, 1952 ; INDIAN ART AND DANCE

Addressing a New York audience immediately after her return to the U.S. from India, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt said that there was a great deal that India and America could learn from each other. She added that such reciprocal education should be a "two-way street".

Mrs. Roosevelt was referring to things spiritual but her words wo ld apply with even greater force to things cultural for there is no doubt that any cultural ENTENTE between these two great countries can only be on a two-way basis. True, India's cultural tradition is rich with the harvest of many centuries but American Art and philosophy have certain qualities that we could absorb with advantage And even aside from these purely intellectual considerations there are weighty social and political reasons which call for lasting Indo-American friendship. In these spheres too, a bilateral flow of goodwill is an essential factor. Considered in the light of the foregoing the series of demonstration lectures on "Indian Art and Dance" by Mr. U.S.Krishna Rao arranged by the U.S.I.S., in Bangalore is a step in the right direction. The results are already evident in the interest these lectures have aroused.

Delivering the first talk of the series on Wednesday, April 9, Mr.U.S. Krishna Rao began with a brief sketch of the history of Indian culture in general and the origin of the classical dance-art in particular. Quotating Dr.S.Radha Krishnan he defined culture as "Intellectual alertness, receptiveness to beauty, humane feeling and social enthusiasm" and added that any study of the culture of a country therefore should be made against the background of that country's philosophy, religion and art. Indian culture had remained fundamentally intact, strengthened and revitalised inspite of the influx of and friction with other cultures which had come in through the years of political upheaval and foreign invasions.

One of the chief ideals of this culture, the speaker said, was the conception of the figure of Siva the great Yogi, which had come down from about the year 3250 B.C. with its symbolic exhortation to us "to be kings not over others but over ourselves." This inner significance was always present in every form of Indian art and even more so in the self-expressiveness of the dance. This was the reason why all the fine arts were inter-related and the study of any one art-form required a knowledge of theothers.

Mr. Krishna Rao then went on to explain the fundamentals of Bharata Natya with suitable demonstrations of the actual movements, poses and gestures. He was assisted inthis by his pupil Miss Savithri Sahani.

Continuing his demonstration lecture on April 16, Mr. Krishna Rao took up for elucidation the bodily movements involved in Bharata Natya and their classification. He said that the famous temple of Nataraja in Chidambaram contained a sculptured record of these movements according to Bharata's Natya Shastra which consisted of 108 KARANAS and 32 ANGAHARAS. The ADAVUS or movements were combinations of these ANGAHARAS and KARANAS. Combinations and arrangements of these adavus intheir turn formed the pure NRITTA or dance.

Putting it differently, ADAVUS were the alphabets from which the rhythmic patterns of the dance were constructed.

The speaker then proceeded to explain how exactly dance patterns were built up from Adavus. Miss Rajeshwari, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. P.Krishnamurthy, danced a few jathis, as expl examples. Mr. Krishna Rao then discussed at some length the various types of Abhinaya and the Mudras that are used in Bharata Natya.

The third lecture in this series is scheduled for Thursday, April 27, at 7 p.,. at the U.S.I.S.Library when Mr. Krishna Rao will continue his talk on Indian art and Dance assisted by hiswife, Smt. Chandrabhaga Devi.

DECCAN HERALD : SUNDAY, April 27, 1952. INDIAN ART AND DANCE (2)

Last Thursday Mr. U.S.Krishna Rao delivered his third demonstration lecture on "Indian Art and Dance" at the U.S.I.S.Library, Bangalore.

The first two talks concerned the origin and history of Bharata Natya, the various aspects of training the body, mind and soul of the dancer and the fundamentals from which the different dance patterns were evolved. As part of these fundamentals or structural units came the many movements of the eyes eyebrows, neck, the 28 single and the 23 two-handed mudras or alphabets of the hand language of Bharata Natya.

The main subject of Thursday's lecture was the choregraphic expression of sentiment and emotion according to the tenets of Bharata Natya. This classical dance art of India, Mr. Krishna Rao said was an amazing study of human nature. There was nothing superficial or unfaithful in it and its classification of human [illegible]. [illegible] emotins into eight rasas or sentiments, was an example of its masterly insight into the mind of man. The eight rasas codified by Bharata Natya were Sringara (erotic), Hasya (comic), Karunya(Pathetic), Roudra (furious), Veera (heroic), Bhayankara (terrihle), Bibhatsa(odious), Adbhuta (marvellous) and according to some, a ninth rasa namely Santa (peaceful). Corresponding to these eight rasas or sentiments were eight dominant states or Sthayi Bhavas which were known by the same names.

Apart from these eight dominant states there were also 33 transitory bhavas and eight temperamental states or Sathvika Bhavas, such as paralysis, tremor, change of voice or colour, weeping, fainting etc., making up an aggregate of 49 emotional states. In actual practice a Rasa or sentiment is produced by a blending of dominant and transitory states. The lecture then went on to list the various colours and presiding deities ascribed to the different sentiments and a detailed analysis of the dominant and transitory states.

The foregoing was illustrated by three dance pieces specially chosen to bring out the use of mudras and advus in bringing out the [illegible] emotional content of each song. The first piece a Shabdam was beautifully rendered by Smt. Chandrabhaga Devi and the second was danced by Miss Savithri Sahabi. The third a Varnam was done by Miss Balamani who though very young shows real promise. Incidentally, we must pay a tribute to Miss Mary Kyle Watson, the seven year old daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Watson of the Rockfeller Foundation who danced an Alarippu on the first day with remarakble ELAN in spite of the fact that she took up Bharata Natya only a few months ago.

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SIGNAL SERVICE

To

The Editor, "Deccan Herald"

Sir,

Through the columns of your paper may I express my sincere and heartfelt feelings of gratitude to the authorities of the United States Information Service, Bangalore, for organising a really instructive weekly series of demonstration lectures on Bharata Natyam and Kathakali by Mr..U.S.Krishna Rao. I have seen and heard some of India's top-ranking artistes but I have never before heard such a masterly exposition of the Indian classical dance as this. His lectures are erudite and scholarly, and the demonstrations, by himself, his wife or by his pupils are simply exhilarating. Mr. Krishna Rao seems to be a born teacher and possesses capacity to interpret every movement, gesture, pose or sentiment with real lucidity.

When a nation disburses information and literature about its own country its people and their art, or when it sponsors and patronises in its own land the cultural programme of other nations it is helping the cause of mutual understanding between the nations, but where an Embassy goes out of its way to dig out an artiste and sponsor a programme like the above, it is really laying the foundations for ever-lasting peace.

Bangalore, May 2. G.B.PANT

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MYSINDIA, APRIL 27, 1952. FEMININE FANCIES : THE ART OF DANCING

Lovers of Indian dancing foregathered at the United States Information Library on the 9th of April, to attend the first of a series of lectures on Indian Art and Dancing, by Prof. U.S.Krishna Rao.

The Professor, being a man of learning as well as an exponent of Bharata Natyam, is in an excellent position to lecture on the subject.

Dr. Purcell of the U.S.I.S., presented the speaker, Prof. Krishna Rao, having studied Indian dancing in its purest form, realizes how much it is a part of Indian culture, and dwelt at length on that aspect of the subject.

Explaining the relationship between classical Indian dancing and art and culture, he said every form of Indian art, whether it be sculpture, painting, poetry, drama, music or dancing, has as its foundation, both philosophy and religion,. India's finest carvings are to be found in her age-old temples; her most famous mural paintings are withinthe dim sanctity of ancient caves where holy men dedicated themselves to the Supreme Being; the most beautiful poetry and music of India is devotional in character, and much of Indian classical dancing is an invocation to the deity. Inshort, Indian art in its pristine purity, is dedicated to God.

Prof. Krishna Rao, also explained in lucid words, how all the arts of our country are linked one with the other. The story he narrated to prove this was so apt, that we cannot do better than to repeat it. A handsome young Rajput prince, entering an enchanting garden, came upon the most beautiful young princess he had ever seen. Brush in hand, she was painting a picture. The Prince, having fallen in love at first sight, proceeded to take steps to acquiant himself with t is vision of loveliness. "Fair lady", he said, "May I be your pupil?" Whereupon she replied: "To be able to paint, you must know something of sculpture, for it is necessary, in painting, to know the lines of the human body." Then teach me sculpturing," said he. The Princess answered: "In order to be successful as a sculptor, you must study the art of dancing, for sculpturing is based to a great extent on dance poses." "I shall learn dancing, then" cried the eager young man. The Princess' answer this time was: "Only those with a knowledge of music can study dancing, for music supplies the rhythm of the dance." "Then let it be music", pleaded the Prince, undaunted, towhich the Princess gave her final answer: "There is no real music without poetry, for poetry is the soul of music."

Prof. Krishna Rao said that all students of Indian classical dancing should begin by dedicating themselves to Shiva, and Nataraja the god of dancing and in obeying the commands of these gods, should make themselves Kings - not kings over men, but kings over themselves, with a complete mastery over mind and body.

In explaining certain details of dancing, the speaker said that man is the personification of strength, and woman of grace, so certain dance movements are based on strength and are essentially masculine, while other movements are the essence of grace and are purely feminine. There are, however, many dance forms suitable for men as well as women.

In this lecture, the first of the series, the speaker dealt primarily with the movements of the human body; in his second lecture - due take place a week later - he will stress the mind and the intellect working behind the body, and inthe third talk he will deal with the soul behind the intellect. In art, the soul is all-important, for that which is soul-less is flat and uninspiring and devoid of true beauty.

Prof. Krishna Rao then proceeded to give a series of demonstrations of different forms and movements of Bharatanatyam. He explained the intricacies of rhythm, and of hand and foot work. Assisting him in these illustrations was a charming little pupil of his, Miss Savitri Shahani, who has been studying under him for the last four months, and gives promise of blossoming into a graceful and elegant danseuse.

The Professor had reserved, as the last item on the programme, a special treat for his audience. This was a Devotional Dance - Alarippu - performed (to a rhythm of three beats) by little Miss Mary Kyle Watson, nine-year old daughter of Dr. Watson of the Rockfeller Foundation and Mrs. Watson. May Kyle has studied under Prof. Krishna Rao for two and a half months, but already appears to have imbibed the true spirit of the dance. Daintily fashioned, with tiny flower-like hands and feet, cameo features, and soft fair hair, she completely captivated the audience. Clad in classic Eastern attire, this lovely solemn-eyed child brought the spiritual aspect into her dancing with her pure angelic beauty.

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MYSINDIA, MAY 11, 1952.

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For the benefit of their very large circle of friends and admirers, Mr.U.S. Krishna Rao, and his charming wife Chandrabhaga Devi, two very popular dancers in these parts, gave a delightful Dance Recital at the Canara Union, Bangalore City, recently. Among the large gathering present was Mr. Robert Watson, wife of Dr. Watson of the Rockefeller Foundation, and whose young daughter is one of Krishna Rao's most altert pupils.

The Bhagvad Gita number where Lord Krishna preaches the stirring philosophy of the Gita to the warrior Arjuna is easily Krishna Rao's masterpiece. Offsetting the thunder and lightning effects of that were the lyrical soft-flowing pieces like the Marwari Folk Dance and the Manipuri, which were delightfully put over by Sudha Ghosh who, I was told, had come to Bangalore to learn Bharata Natyam and Kathakali from Krishna Rao, and who was seen a few days later in a delightful exposition of her art at the Coco Palm Tree (Rajendrasinhji) Institute, where she danced before a large gathering.

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THE ART OF KATHAKALI.

PROF. U.S. KRISHNA RAO has now completed his series of lectures on Indian Art and Dancing. These lectures were delivered with demonstrations, at the United States Information Library.

The public of Bangalore much appreciated this opportunity of learning something of India's ancient art of dancing, and we tender our thanks not only to the Professor but to Dr. Purcell, Vice Consul for America, who is eager to bring about a closer understanding between East and West, and who, like many of his compatriots in this country, takes a lively interest in Indian art.

Classical Indian dancing is highly technical and intricate, but Prof. Krishna Rao with his charm of manner and sparkling personality, has been able to hold the interest of his listeners throughout his talks. Bringing warmth and vitality to the rigid rules of Bharata Natyam, he has simplified for his audiences, one of the most complicated of of arts, and has lead them with his infectious enthusiasm into a world of strange arresting beauty and colour.

Bharata Natyam is an ancient dance form; in fact, its history is as old as the civilization of the land in which it has evolved. It is very much a stylized art, and it is only after years of study that is elaborate technique can be mastered. But hte layman who has a love for the beautiful and a thirst for knowledge, does not ask too much, and is grateful is somebody like Prof. Krishna Rao introduces to his a great art which is otherwise completely beyond his reach.

If Bharata Natyam appears intricate and complicated to the layman, Kathakali seems even more complex and elaborate. To the inexperienced eye, the movements of Kathakali may at first appear strange and bizarre; but the Professor, painting for you world pictures of Malabar the fair land in which this ancient art was born, helps you to appreciate its rich and varied beauty.

In the fist of his lectures on Kathakali, he dwelt at length on Malabar. On the green and tranquil plains of this charming land, was elaborated this powerful art which is an expression of the vitality and force of a people very near to nature and in the elaborate gesture language of Kathakali, the beauties of Nature are constantly depicted, with movements that are graceful yet forceful.

The authentic Kathakali in its pure unsullied form, is essentially an outdoor dance. Performances are given in the open, after dusk; the scene may be the South-west coast, from where you can can hear the lapping of distant waves; it may be the verdant banks of some meandering river, or perhaps some village mango grove, some village lawn, or ageold temple.

The dance is performed to a weird, incessant accompaniment of drums. This intense, violent drumming, heralds the dance, drawing the village folk from far and near. Commencing at sunset, the performance sometimes carries on throughout the night. Oil lamps flicker, casting eerie shadows behind the performers, who are completely lost in their art.

Submerging all individuality in characterization, the actors live their roles. Actors, they are called, not dancers, for though Kathakali is a dance from reflecting the folk lore of the land it is very definitely drama.

The dramas are usually of a religious character, depicting a scene from the Ramayana, the Mahabaratha, or from the life of Krishan. Dignity, power and strength all stressed in pantomime bring to life heros and heroines of Hindu mythology. The dramas generally culminate in some enthralling combat, with the triumph of good over evil.

The costumes worn are elaborate an picturesque, and the head dresses are highly stylized. Each character has its own costume. Formerly the dancers used to be masked, but to day, only makeup is used. So heavy is the make up, that it completely camouflages the face of the actor. The colours used are green, red, yellow, white and black. This make-up is peculiar to Kathakali, and the experienced eye will immediately tell one character from another. The effect of the make-up can be awe-inspiring, grotesque or terrifying, for it must not be forgotten that Kathakali is drama, pantomime, and a dance form of a martial nature, all in one.

Twenty-four single hand mudras form the alphabet, and these are responsible for the composition of a wide and rich gesture language. Though the rules of the dance are rigid and codified the profuse vocabulary permist of the actor to describe not only human emotions and sentiments, but any object, scene or story; he can indulge in variations or in extemporization, not for minutes, but for hours on end.

Prof Krishna Rao repeatedly stressed that Kathakali is cent per cent Yoga. All the complicated postures and movements, as well as the exercises of the eyes, require a masterly control over the physical body.

Students start at the age of seven or eight when their limbs are still supple, and spend a fairly long period of time learning the five fundamental Namaskaras (forms of greeting) and the Kelemental exercises. They then undergo a regular course of massage so as to acquire the necessary supplenes of the body, and the correct postures prescribed. So much force is required for the massage, that the teacher, holding on to a bar above his head, does it, not with his hands but his feet, on the pupil who is lying on the ground below him!

A DINNER PARTY.

Prof. Krishna Rao's delightful series of lectures terminated with an interesting discourse. In this lecture he covered a very wide field. He dealt with the art of India, and the culture and ideals behind it. He stressed the fact that all art in this country, whether it is in the form of sculpture, architecture, painting, music, dancing, drama or poetry--and whether it be ancient or modern, springs from, and seeks fusion with the divine.

At the conclusion of the lecture, Dr Purcell warmly thanked the Professor for having so boldly and graphically introduced to us Mother India's ancient and wonderful art of dancing. Dr Purcell also thanked the members of the audience for their eager and encouraging response.

Mr. Hunt then rose to speak a few words of appreciation on behalf of the audience. In glowing terms, he expressed to Prof. Krishna Rao the thanks of all those present; he also expressed gratitude to Dr. Purcell for having enabled the Professor to deliver to the public this brilliant and enlightening series of lectures. Gestures such as these, he said, helped to strengthen the bond between India and the U.S.A. and were responsible for the promotion of understanding and friendship between one country and another.

Dr. and Mrs. Purcell had the happy idea of arranging a dinner party in honour of Prof. Krishna Rao, later in the evening.

It was very definitely a party with a difference, for the Purcells had decided to get together residents of Bangalore who are interested in art, or connected with it in some way. Both Dr. Purcell, and his sweet young wife, themselves take a genuine interest in art, and this is apparent in their residence. There are exquisite Chinese paintings on the walls, pieces of Indian statuary, and books to delight any art lover or ornithologist.

Prof. Krishna Rao appeared very much in his element; encircled by the enthusiasts of Terpsichore he was called upon to answer a series of questions in connection with art and dancing.

Host and Hostess looked after everyone in their unaffected informal manner, and it was a very pleasant gathering.

A lovely buffet dinner awaited the guests. The menu featured the most tempting of American favourities, which included creamed corn, delectable salads in jelly, asparagus, and feather-light chocolate and carmel cakes served with luscious canned peaches.

Among those present that evening, were Mrs. Habibullah, who can well be called a patron of the arts; Harbans Singh who had attended Prof. Krishna Rao's lectures with faithful regularity; Dr. and Mrs. Watson whose beautiful nine year old daughter Mary Kyle is one of the Professor's most promising little pupils; Mr. and Mrs. Turner; Mr. and Mrs. Gist; Mrs. Krishna Rao who is herself an accomplished dancer, and had assisted her husband with demonstrations during the course of his lectures; Mr. Shahani, and two charming young pupils of Prof. Krishna Rao's Savitri Shahani, and Miss Balamani.